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[Translated for this Journal.]

WEBER'S DER FREYSCHUTZ.

BY HECTOR BERLIOZ.

We are in the middle of June, and it is almost cold; the wind groans, the trees cry and are agitated; the clouds scud over the heavens; melancholy memories are awakened. . . . Seems it not that, thus sorrowfully moved, it should be easy for me to speak of the work and of the artist that just now pre-occupy our musical world exclusively? Yet it is not so. Certain impressions are so deep, the ardor of certain enthusiasms is so chaste, and there are reminiscences of youth connected with such painful circumstances, that the heart bleeds to let them escape. I seem to have lived a century during the fifteen or sixteen years that have elapsed since the day when for the first and last time WEBER passed through Paris. He was on his way to London, to witness there the failure of one of his *chef-d'œuvres* (his "Oberon"), and die. How I longed to see him then! with what palpitations I followed him, the evening when, already suffering and a few hours before his fatal departure for England, he wished to be present at the resumption of *Olympie*! My pursuit was vain. The morning of that very day, Lesueur had said to me: "I have just received a visit from Weber! Five minutes sooner you would have heard him playing to me upon the piano entire scenes of our scores; he knows them all!" Entering a music store a few hours after:

"If you only knew who was sitting there a moment since!"

— Who then?

— "Weber!"

Arriving at the Opera in the evening, and hearing the crowd repeat: "Weber just passed through the green room;—he has gone back into the hall;—he is in the first boxes." I despaired of ever being able to reach him. But it was all useless; nobody could point him out to me. Just the reverse of those poetical apparitions of Shakspeare, visible to all, he remained invisible to one alone. Too unknown to dare to write to him, and without friends in a position to present me to him, I had to go off without a sight of him. O! if the inspired men could divine the great passions which their works engender! if it were given to them to discover those admirations of a hundred thousand souls concentrated and absorbed in one, how sweet it would be to them to be surrounded by them, to receive them, and find consolation in them from the envious hatred of some, the unintelligent frivolity of others, and the tediousness of all!

In spite of his popularity, in spite of the tremendous éclat and vogue of *Der Freyschütz*, in spite of the consciousness he undoubtedly had of his own genius, Weber, more than any one perhaps, would have been happy at these obscure but sincere adorations. He had written admirable pages, treated by the virtuosos and the critics with the most disdainful coldness; his last opera, and his grandest, *Euryanthe*, had only half succeeded; it was permissible for him to feel some anxiety about the fate of *Oberon*, considering that for such a work it needs a public of poets, a *parterre* of the kings of thought;—finally, the king of kings, Beethoven himself, for a long time had failed to appreciate him. We may conceive then that he might, as he wrote at that time, have doubted his own musical mission, and that he died of the blow which struck his *Oberon*.

If the difference was great between the destiny of this marvellous score and that of his eldest, the *Freyschütz*, it is not that there is anything vulgar in the physiognomy of the fortunate elect of popularity, anything mean in its forms, anything false in its brilliancy, anything tumid or emphatic in its language. He has not placed the one more than the other under the patronage of the executants; he has never made the least concession to the puerile demands of fashion, or the still more imperious requirements of the great

proud singers. He was as simply true, as proudly original, as much an enemy to formulas, as dignified in the face of the public, whose applause he would not buy by any cowardly condescension, in short as great an artist in the *Freyschütz* as in the *Oberon*. But the poesy of the first is full of movement, of passion and of contrasts. The supernatural there brings in strange and violent effects; melody, harmony and rhythm combined thunder, blaze and lighten; all conspires to rouse the attention smartly. Moreover, the personages, taken in common life, find more numerous sympathies; the portrayal of their sentiments, the painting of their manners occasion too sometimes the employment of a less lofty style, which, restored by an exquisite elaboration, acquires an irresistible charm even for those who despise musical sweatmeats, and, thus adorned, seems like the ideal type of art, a miracle of invention.

In "Oberon," on the contrary, although human passions play a great part in it, the fantastic still predominates, but it is a graceful, calm, fresh fantasy. Instead of monsters of horrible apparitions there are choirs of aerial spirits, sylphs, undines and fairies. And the language of these gently smiling people, a language by itself, which borrows its principal charm from harmony, whose melody is conspicuously vague, whose rhythm, slow and veiled, often becomes difficult to seize, and so much the less intelligible to the crowd, as its fineness cannot be perceived, even by musicians, without an extreme attention added to a great liveliness of imagination. The German reverie no doubt sympathizes more easily with this divine poesy; for us, Frenchmen, it would only be, I fear, the subject of a curious study for an instant, soon ending in fatigue and ennui. There was an opportunity to judge when the troupe from Carlsruhe came in 1828 to give representations at the theatre Favart. The chorus of undines, that song so softly cadenced, which expresses a happiness so pure and so complete, is composed of only two tolerably short strophes. But as the constantly sweet inflexions balance themselves upon a slow movement, the attention of the public died out at the end of a few measures; after the first couplet the uneasiness of the audience was evident, they murmured, and to make the second repeat heard became impossible; they attempted it but once.

Whatever the difficulty of making "Oberon" popular with us, the popularity of the "Freyschütz" was rapid, general, and seems not likely

to decline. The *mise en scène* of this masterpiece at the Opera, has just revived it; there can be no doubt that it will still grow. The public comprehends now and appreciates in its ensemble and in its details this composition, which once seemed to it merely an amusing eccentricity. It sees the reason of things obscure till now; it recognizes in Weber the severest unity of thought, the most exact sense of expression, of dramatic fitness, joined to a superabundance of musical ideas employed with a reserve full of wisdom, to an imagination whose immense wings nevertheless never carry the author beyond the limits where the ideal ends and the absurd commences.

It is in fact difficult, in the old or the new school, to find a score so irreproachable in all points as that of *Der Freyschütz*; so constantly interesting from one end to the other; whose melody has more freshness in the various forms with which he invests it; whose rhythms are more captivating, whose harmonic inventions more numerous, more salient, and whose employment of masses of voices and instruments more energetic without efforts, more sweet without affectation. From the end of the overture to the last accord of the final chorus, it is impossible for me to find a measure the suppression or the change of which would seem desirable. Intelligence, imagination, genius shine in all parts with a powerful radiance which only an eagle's eye could bear, unless a sensibility as inexhaustible as it is chaste, softened its brilliancy and spread over the hearer the sweet shelter of its veil.

The overture is crowned queen to-day; no one thinks of contesting it. It is quoted as the model of its kind. The theme of the Andante and that of the Allegro are sung every where. There is one which I must cite, because it has been less remarked and because it moves me more than all the rest. It is that long moaning melody, flung by the clarinet across the tremolo of the orchestra, like a distant complaint scattered by the winds in the depths of the woods. That strikes right to the heart; and, for me at least, that virginal strain, which seems to exhale towards heaven a timid reproach, while a sombre harmony roars and menaces beneath it, is one of the most novel, most poetic and most beautiful contrasts which modern art has produced in music. In this instrumental inspiration you may easily recognize already a reflection of the character of Agatha, which is soon to be developed with all its impassioned candor. Yet it is borrowed from the rôle of Max. It is the exclamation of the young hunter in the moment when, from the height of the rocks, he fathoms with his eye the abysses of the infernal vale. But a little modified in its contours, and instrumented in this manner, this phrase completely changes its character and accent.

The author possessed to a supreme degree the art of working these melodic transformations.

It would require a volume to study separately each phase of a work so rich in various beauties. The principal traits of its physiognomy too are very generally known. Every one admires the sarcastic gaiety of Kilian's couplets, with the refrain of the laughing chorus; the surprising effect of those women's voices grouped in the major second, and the boisterous rhythm of the men's voices which complete this bizarre concert of railleries. Who has not felt the despondency, the

desolation of Max, the touching kindness which breathes in the theme of the chorus seeking to console him, the exuberant joy of those robust peasants starting for the chase, the comical platitude of that march played by the village artisans at the head of Kilian's triumphal procession; and that diabolical song of Caspar, with its laughing grimace, and that savage clamor of his grand air: "Triumph! Triumph!" which in so menacing a manner prepares the final explosion! All now, amateurs and artists, listen with rapture to that delicious duet, in which are sketched from the outset the contrasted characters of the two young maidens. This idea of the master once recognized, one has no more difficulty in following its development to the end. Agatha is always tender and dreamy; while Annette, happy child who never loved, is always pleased with innocent coquetry; always her joyous prattle, her linnet's song, give out sparkling sallies in the midst of the interviews of the two anxious lovers, pre-occupied with sadness. Nothing escapes the hearer of those sighs of the orchestra during the prayer of the young virgin awaiting her affianced lover, of those sweetly strange murmurings, where the attentive ear seems to hear "The low sound of the night winds stealing through the pines;" and it seems as if the darkness become suddenly more intense and colder, at that magical modulation into C major: "All is now sleeping." What a sympathetic shudder afterwards comes over one at that rapturous outburst: "'Tis he! 'tis he!" and above all at that immortal cry which shakes the whole soul: "Now heaven opens for me!"

No, no, I must say it, no where else is there so beautiful an air. No other master, German, Italian or French, has so made speak successively in the same scene sacred prayer, melancholy, anxiety, meditation, the sleep of nature, the silent eloquence of night, the harmonious mystery of the starry heavens, the torment of expectation, hope, half-certainty, joy, intoxication, transport, desperate love! And what an orchestra to accompany these noble vocal melodies! What inventions! What ingenious researches! What treasures which a sudden inspiration has discovered! Those flutes in the low notes, those violins in quartet, those sketches by altos and violoncellos in sixths, that palpitating rhythm of the basses, that *crescendo* mounting and bursting forth at the climax of its luxurious ascension, those pauses during which the passion seems to recover its forces to launch forth again with the more violence. There is nothing like it! it is the art divine! it is poetry! it is love itself! The day when Weber heard this scene for the first time rendered as he had dreamed that it could be rendered, if he ever heard it so, that radiant day, doubtless, made all succeeding days look sad and pale to him. He should have died! What could he do with life after such joys as that! . . .

[To be concluded in our next.]

MUSIC A STIMULANT TO MENTAL EXERCISE. Alfieri often, before he wrote, prepared his mind by listening to music. "Almost all my tragedies were sketched in my mind, either in the act of hearing music, or a few hours after"—a circumstance which has been recorded of many others. Lord Bacon had music often played in the room adjoining his study. Milton listened to his organ for his solemn inspirations; and music was even necessary to Warburton. The Symphonies which awoke in the poet sublime emotions, might have composed the inventive mind

of the great critic in the visions of his theoretical mysteries. A celebrated French preacher, Bourdalou or Massillon, was once found playing on a violin, to screw his mind up to the pitch, preparatory to his sermon, which, within a short interval, he was to preach before the court. Curran's favorite mode of meditation was with his violin in his hand; for hours together would he forget himself, running voluntaries over the strings, while his imagination, in collecting its tones, was opening all his faculties for the coming emergency at the bar.—*D'Israeli on the Literary Character.*

For Dwight's Journal of Music.

The Mathematics of Music.

Sound is the result of the vibration of sonorous bodies. A particular sound is musical when its vibrations are uniform. Experiment shows that, of two sounds at the interval of an octave, the higher has twice as many vibrations as the lower. The comparative number of vibrations is the ratio of two sounds to each other. If middle C have 256 vibrations in a second, concert C will have 512.

The ratio of the octave is	1 to 2
" " fifth,	2 to 3
" " fourth,	3 to 4
" " major third,	4 to 5
" " minor third,	5 to 6
" " large tone,	8 to 9
" " small tone,	9 to 10
" " diatonic semi-tone, .	15 to 16

Omitting for the present the ratios of other intervals, I give those of the major diatonic scale, premising that the more convenient way of writing them is in the form of fractions.

Do.	Re.	Mi.	Fa.	Sol.	La.	Si.	Do.
$\frac{8}{8}$	$\frac{9}{8}$	$\frac{10}{8}$	$\frac{11}{8}$	$\frac{12}{8}$	$\frac{13}{8}$	$\frac{14}{8}$	$\frac{15}{8}$

By combining these, we may ascertain the ratios of all possible intervals within the scale. Suppose, for example, that it be required to determine that of the interval *Mi* to *Sol*. Multiply together the ratios, $\frac{10}{8}$ and $\frac{8}{9}$. The result, in the lowest terms, is $\frac{5}{9}$, the ratio of the minor third. Hence by recurring to what has been said above, it may be seen that if a string sounding *Mi*, vibrate 400 times in a second, a string giving *G*, will vibrate 500 times in a second.

Let us determine the ratio of *Re* to *Fa*. Multiplying the two fractions, $\frac{9}{8}$ and $\frac{11}{10}$, we have $\frac{99}{80}$, which reduced is $\frac{27}{20}$. This is less than the ratio of the minor third. Hence, in any scale the interval from *Re* to *Fa* is less than a minor third. The reader can easily learn by a similar calculation that it is less than a fifth from *Re* to *La*. I omit the demonstration.

The ratio from *Do* to *Re* is $\frac{9}{8}$; that from *Re* to *Mi* is $\frac{10}{9}$. Deduct the less from the greater, which is accomplished by inverting the less and then multiplying as before. Thus $\frac{9}{8}$ multiplied by $\frac{9}{10}$ gives $\frac{81}{80}$. This last is then the ratio of the difference between the large and the small tone. This interval is called the *comma*.

If 53 commas be combined, or, which is the same thing, if the ratio $\frac{81}{80}$ be multiplied into itself 53 times, the result will be within a minute fraction of $\frac{1}{2}$, which is the ratio of the octave. Hence it is convenient, and also sufficiently accurate to regard the octave as an interval composed of 53 commas.

It appears from the above, that there are steps of three different dimensions in the common scale, viz: large tones, small tones, and diatonic

semi-tones; the large tone consists of 9 commas, the small tone of 8, and the diatonic semi-tone of 5.

The order of intervals in the scale is as follows: Do to Re, 9 commas; Re to Mi, 8; Mi to Fa, 5; Fa to Sol, 9; Sol to La, 8; La to Si, 9; Si to Do, 5.

It will be easy to determine the measure, in commas, of all diatonic intervals.

The octave is	53 commas.
The fifth is	31 "
The fourth is	22 "
The third, major, is	17 "
The third, minor, is	14 "
The large tone is	9 "
The small tone is	8 "
The diatonic semi-tone is .	5 "

I propose to examine the subject of Temperament, in some future articles, to which this is preliminary. E. H.

For Dwight's Journal of Music.

American Voices.

MR. EDITOR: I have read with much pleasure the remarks of your correspondent on "American voices." Everybody has heard at our Musical Conventions, in the churches, the streets, voices of remarkable beauty. Why do they so seldom reach that perfection of which they are capable? There are several reasons for this, some of which I propose to mention. Many, I think, are spoiled by injudicious use, and particularly by chorus singing. We will suppose a young soprano of good musical capacities, but without any knowledge of the proper use of the voice, beyond what may be acquired in a large singing school. She becomes a member of a church choir with twenty or thirty others, or joins one of our Sacred Music Societies. Here she learns to read music, it is true, but she also learns to scream. Having never been taught to develop the tone in the Italian method, (the only true method of vocalization, by the way,) knowing nothing of the importance of preserving the different registers within their proper limits, and having to sing against many others, whose chief aim is to produce as much sound as possible, without special regard to its quality, the result is that the voice is strained and in many cases permanently injured.

The remedy for this is instruction from a teacher who understands the Italian method of vocalizing. Not instruction in classes, because no two voices are alike or to be developed by the same rules, but individual instruction, solfeggio practice at the piano. This is very expensive, but is, I am confident, the only way in which a young voice can be properly trained. Many good voices are not discovered till the proper season for their cultivation has passed. After a certain age, and that not an advanced one, the vocal organs become intractable. With the increased attention given to music among us, and the greater respect in which it is held, we may hope that, in future, good voices will be more readily recognized early in life. We are sorry to confess another reason for the scarcity of first rate singers, and this is that many persons promising good voices are so flattered by their friends and admirers that they become conceited, and fancy that nobody can teach them anything. A few hours of solfeggio practice under a competent master would, we are sure, in many cases, dispel this delusion.

But I will not further trespass on your limits. We hope for better things. Several excellent teachers of the voice are now doing service in Boston, and if there is any truth in my remarks, we shall profit by their labors. X.

A SERENADE.

BY R. H. STODDARD.

The moon is muffled in a cloud,
That folds the lover's star,
But still beneath thy balcony
I touch my soft guitar.

If thou art waking, Lady dear,
The fairest in the land,
Unbar thy wreathe'd lattice now,
And wave thy snowy hand.

She hears me not; her spirit lies
In trances mute and deep;—
But music turns the golden key
Within the gate of sleep!

Then let her sleep, and if I fail
To set her spirit free,
My song will mingle in her dream,
And she will dream of me!

Mozart's "Magic Flute."

Beethoven pronounced *Zauberflöte* the masterpiece of Mozart, which goes far to substantiate what has been often asserted, and as often denied, that the composer of *Fidelio* was jealous of the reputation of the composer of *Don Juan*. Without presuming to offer an opinion on so delicate a point—without wishing to pry into the inward depths of the heart of Beethoven, or to arraign human nature on the plea that the greatest and most gifted have the failings of the weakest—we may state, without reserve, that so far as a close acquaintance with the dramatic writings of Mozart can entitle us to judge, the opera of *Die Zauberflöte*, viewed as a whole, appears not comparable to *Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, or even to *Idomeneo*, a much earlier effort. That the score is crowded with beauties—that the melodies are abundant, fresh, and genuine—that the fact of having a tale of enchantment to set to music conducted Mozart into a new world, where the inexhaustible fertility of his invention was triumphantly demonstrated, cannot be denied. But several causes militated against the possibility of the *Zauberflöte* (any more than the *Clemenza di Tito*, its inferior, which was composed almost at the same time) being one of the greatest and most perfect works of its author. The circumstances under which it was written were unfavorable. Emanuel Schikaneder, the manager of one of the Vienna theatres, an old companion of Mozart's, when on the brink of ruin, prevailed on the great musician to promise him an opera in which the frivolous tastes of the majority of the *habitués* of his establishment should be in some measure consulted. Schikaneder himself wrote the book, and though the task was very unwelcome to Mozart, who was uncompromising in all that concerned his art, he undertook it to save his friend. How this kindness of heart was repaid by the basest ingratitude, is well known. Mozart never received a florin for the music of *Zauberflöte*, although the opera met with great success and revived the fortunes of the theatre. Schikaneder (who was also the original Papageno) disposed of copies of the score to the directors of other theatres, and appropriated to himself what it had been agreed should be the only remuneration for the time and pains Mozart had bestowed upon it. During the progress of composition Mozart was suffering under constant ill health, and forebodings of his approaching end were incessantly tormenting him. But, worst of all, the book of Schikaneder is little better than a farrago of absurdities, which no genius, however transcendent, could possibly succeed in elevating to serious interest. A brief sketch of the plot may help to substantiate this

assertion. Sarastro, high priest of the temple of Isis, is desirous of educating Pamina, daughter of Astrifiamante, Queen of Night, in the faith and mysteries of the true religion. To carry out his purpose he has her conveyed away secretly from her mother's custody. Tamino, Prince of Egypt, is enamored of Pamina, and tracing her to the temple of Isis becomes a novice in the mysteries, in the hopes of regaining possession of the object of his love. To test the constancy of his nature, Sarastro, a very well-meaning personage for a priest of Isis, condemns him to a temporary separation from Pamina, and causes him to undergo sundry ordeals by which his truth and courage may be established. Pamina is condemned to similar trials. Both come out victorious, and in spite of the arts of the Queen of Night, who, burning with the desire of vengeance against Sarastro for having robbed her of her daughter, attempts to persuade Pamina to kill him and steal his crown, the lovers are found worthy of Isis and of each other. The comic action is divided between Papageno, a birdcatcher, who follows Tamino in his adventures, and Monostatos, the chief of the slaves of Sarastro, a traitor, who betrays his trust and endeavors to seduce Pamina. As a safeguard, Tamino is provided with a magic flute, by means of which he is enabled to give alarm and summon aid in case of danger. Hence, it is needless to add, the name of the opera—*Die Zauberflöte*. Papageno is also gifted with an instrument of music, which, when played upon, turns anger into mirth and sets everybody dancing. The effect which Mozart has made out of this, in the *finale* to the first act, where the famous tune, *O dolce concerto*, is introduced, must be well-remembered by all who have seen the opera. The other personages of the drama are three attendants on the Queen of Night, three good genii (boys of the Temple, in the German *libretto*) in the interest of Sarastro; an old woman, who afterwards becomes Papagena, the wife of Papageno, Demofontes, an orator, styled "initiated," who plays a part in the second act, into the secret of which the audience is not initiated; Oronte, a priest; and two men in armor, whose precise business is inexplicable.

Out of such materials it would have been strange if an interesting story had been constructed. Schikaneder could not do it, with Mozart to assist him, as the result shows. While the first act at least verges on the intelligible, the second would require an *Iamblichus* (not translated by a Taylor) to explain. Genii of either sex, priests, slaves, monsters, armed men, orators, and lions are mingled with the chief actors, in happy confusion. The real signification may possibly have something to do with the mysteries of Isis and Osiris; to the multitude it is "caviare," and sets comment at defiance. Goethe, the poet, nevertheless, wrote what he called a second part of *Zauberflöte*, one of the least generally read of his works. Our intention is not to enter into a critical analysis of an opera which, composed for a German stage in 1791, is at the present moment (60 years after) brought out at an Italian Opera as a certain means of profit. Moreover the music, thanks to its beauty and variety, is familiar "as household words." The short pieces have enjoyed an unchanging popularity in the concert room, and are known to amateurs as well as to musicians. The overture, the most learned and admirable of all Mozart's orchestral preludes, is probably the finest ever composed. Mozart would seem to have written it to console himself for those ephemeral portions of the opera which he was persuaded by Schikaneder to write, and rewrite, until Schikaneder was satisfied. It is a regular feast of counterpoint; but the beauty and sublimity of the ideas, and the exceeding clearness of their development, take away all vestige of pedantry. The *chorale*, or *canto fermo*, in C minor, for the two armed men, in the *finale* to the second act, is also an elaborate and majestic composition, the fugal accompaniment in the orchestra betraying the hand of the consummate master. In opposition to these grand pieces we may cite the first air of Papageno, the birdcatcher; the duet between him and Pamina; and, in short, all the music in which Papageno is concerned, as

among the lightest music Mozart has produced — although, on the other hand, extremely lively and pretty. But, as a counterbalance, there are many passages in *Zauberflöte* which discover neither the beauty of melody, nor the prodigious science, nor the lofty and passionate expression for which the dramatic music of Mozart is generally remarkable. The march, with flute solo, when Pamina and Tamino are passing through the ordeals of fire and water, with another flute solo near the opening of the first *finale*, are absolutely trivial, and are evident proofs of Mozart's contempt for the excessive absurdity of the situation. Wherever opportunities for dramatic effect present themselves, Mozart, as usual, has availed himself of them in a masterly manner. A striking example of this is found in the introduction to the first act, where Tamino is pursued by a serpent, and saved by the intervention of the three attendants of the Queen of Night. Of the passionate declamatory music — a style in which Mozart has never been surpassed and rarely equalled — there are several fine specimens in *Zauberflöte*, among which the most remarkable are the *largo* of the first air of the Queen of Night (in G minor), the song of Pamina (in the same key), and the exquisite quartet in E flat, at the commencement of the second *finale*, for Pamina, and the three boys of the Temple. The power of endowing each of his characters with a distinct and well-sustained individuality, so noticeable in *Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*, is scarcely less remarkable in *Zauberflöte*. The solemnity of the music given to Sarastro and the priests of Isis is wonderfully contrasted with the reckless levity of that of Papageno; while between the *bravura* songs of the Queen of Night (from the profuse employment of the highest notes of the register, destined, no doubt, for some exceptional voice) and the music of Pamina, the difference is equally well maintained. Even in the trios for the female attendants of the Queen of Night, and those for the boys of the Temple of Isis, the contrast is preserved with scarcely less felicity; and it must be noticed that the separate characteristics are set forth quite as strongly in elaborate *morceaux d'ensemble* as in solos, duets, and airs, where, of course, its exhibition would be comparatively easy. If we would refer to isolated pieces, we need only point to the beautiful air, in E flat, of Tamino, *O cara immagine*; the merry little song of Papageno, *Gente è qui luccellatore*, one of the most sparkling tunes ever written; the recitative and air of the Queen of Night (in B flat), *Infelice consolato*, with its pathetic *adagio* and extraordinary passages of *bravura*; the one song of Monostatos, the chief slave, to which the sparing employment of the *contrabasso*, and the incessant reiteration of semi-quavers, impart a special character; the second, and by far the grandest, air of the Queen of Night, *Gli angui d'inferno* (in D minor), in which a mother's curse is conveyed with such terrible power, while the unnatural strain upon the higher notes of the voice in the last movement is overlooked in the belief that the personage and the situation is unnatural; and last, not least, the solemn and magnificent air of Sarastro (in E), *Qui sdegnò*, which the efforts of all the bass singers, bad, good, and indifferent, for the last half century, have failed to render commonplace or hackneyed. This song is an apostrophe to Peace, and music never spoke in language more tranquil, expressive, and sublime. The air in G minor of Pamina, *Ah lo so*, stands alone in pathetic loveliness, and we have therefore separated it from the rest, as incomparable with anything else. Among the best concerted pieces we may include the *morceaux d'ensemble* for the three attendants of the Queen of Night, and those for the three boys of the Temple, which only differ in character, not in degree of beauty. The first *finale*, though very long and varied, is not to be named in the same breath with the *finales* to *Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*; but the second is full of musical beauties, and were it not for the ineffective march of the action, which necessitates so many changes and full closes, would be unexceptionable. The opening quartet and the concluding chorus, both in E flat, are both exquisite in their way. The two quintets are ingenious and interesting pieces

of concerted music; but that in the first act (in B flat), where Papageno begins to sing with the padlock in his mouth, is by far the most beautiful. The little duet, in E flat, *La dove prende amor ricetto*, is as simple and popular a tune as, *O dolce concerto*, and has been as long the property of the *orgues de Barbarie* and other instruments of street harmony. Its melody will be recognized by the uninitiated as the "Manly Heart." To the introduction of the first act we have already alluded, as to one of the finest and most dramatic pieces. The instrumentation of the whole opera is masterly, transparent, and gorgeously colored. Among the effects peculiarly impressive, we may note the use of the trombones in the opening of the overture, and in the beginning of the second act; the sparing manner in which these solemn instruments (too often made the representatives of mere noise by composers) are employed throughout, is worth attention. As in *Don Giovanni* the trombones are only brought in when the statue of the Commendatore appears, so in *Zauberflöte* they are (after the overture) entirely confined to the music of the priests; and we cannot commend the taste of those who, violating Mozart's intention, for the sake of an imaginary increase of power or brilliancy, force them into other parts of the score, and deprive them of their individuality in the points where the composer has himself introduced them. Without entering into further detail, however, we may bring this rapid sketch to a close by repeating that, though the opera of *Zauberflöte* contains some of the best, it also contains some of the least admirable music of Mozart, and, therefore, cannot justly be cited as his *chef d'œuvre*. What is feeble or trivial, however, we readily lay to the stupidity of Schikaneder and the *libretto*; while that which is great and beautiful springs exclusively from the immortal genius of the composer. — *London Times*, July 11, 1851.

Napoleon a Pianist.

Historians have written much about the musical talents of Frederick the Great, Charles IV. George IV. and other monarchs; but no one has hitherto related one word about the musical genius of Napoleon.

The following anecdote will therefore serve to fill up a gap in the history of this Emperor, by illustrating the memorable moment when his musical talent, without giving any premonitory symptoms, shone forth in all its glory!

One evening, a concert took place in the Tuilleries, upon which occasion a number of distinguished French and Italian singers had assembled to contend for the palm. The productions were unquestionably brilliant.

Napoleon, however, seated in his arm chair, appeared very impatient. Every minute he shifted his position, shook his head with vexation, and displayed most unmistakable signs of weariness and *ennui*. The company apprehended a storm; and they were not mistaken; for, suddenly, while Kreutzer was performing a most lovely *andante*, he was requested by Marshal Duroc to desist.

"You tire his Majesty, who desires you will not play any further." The great artist turned pale at this humiliation: but fortunately the concert was nearly at an end. Napoleon arose, and passing by the tragic singer, Madame Branchu, returned her salute, saying "Madame, you had better have your throat planed smooth," and then moved on.

Upon the termination of these concerts, the singers were accustomed to remain in the saloon a short time to enjoy a little *chit-chat*. And the events of that evening afforded them an exclusive subject for conversation. They were well aware, that, when once the Emperor had quitted the room, he never returned; but scarcely had a quarter of an hour elapsed, when, to the complete dismay of the artists, the door opened, and Napoleon stood in the midst of them.

"I want you to sing me the chorus from Nina."

The musicians looked at each other, not one

daring to reply; at length the boldest stuttered out, "Pardon, sire, we do not know that chorus."

"You must know it; every one knows it."

"The chorus-singers, sire, perform it on the stage; we are solo-singers."

"You will sing me the chorus from Nina: I want to hear it."

"But, sire, we have not the music here."

"Then sing it from memory."

"But, sire, the members of the orchestra are gone, and we have thus no accompanying instruments."

"Here is a piano forte."

"Sire, no one here can play it."

"Very well! then I will accompany you myself." And to the amazement of all present, Napoleon sat himself down to the instrument and struck the keys, which, far from producing an agreeable harmony, awakened a most ear-rending discord.

"Now, begin," exclaimed the Emperor, quite insensible to the harsh dissonances he was creating. "Now begin, and keep good time!"

The voices arose in wild and discordant strains, the instrument groaned beneath the imperial hands, and in this style the chorus from Nina was performed: performed, for life or death, as indeed could not otherwise be done by singers who knew not one note of the music, and in the presence of an Emperor, whose only instrument was the sword. At length the concert terminated, and the Emperor, rising from the piano and addressing the artists:

"I am satisfied," he said; "see, every thing succeeds when one but wills it."

Thus saying, he left the room. The ensuing morning, Prince Eugene departed for the court of Franz II. to solicit, in the name of the Emperor of France, the hand of Marie Louise.

During the performance of the chorus from Nina, Napoleon had weighed in the scales the doubts of his secret thoughts, and had formed a resolution. He, at that moment, required occupation for his hands, that his mind might be unfettered. Thus he became a pianist.

Dwight's Journal of Music.

BOSTON, SEPT. 11, 1852.

CORRECTION. By a careless mistake, which we failed to discover in the hurry of leaving the city last week, in our article on "The Musical Convention," we called the scene in "Der Freyschütz": *Wie nahe wir der Schlämmer*, by the first words of another piece in the same opera: *Und ob die Wolke*.

Franz Schubert—His Life and Works.

So very little is known of the history of this remarkable song composer, or of his numerous other works besides his songs, that the reader will thank us, or rather the good friend who for us has compiled the following facts:

Ferdinand, Ignaz and Franz were the three sons of school-teacher Schubert, of the Lichtenthal parish, one of the suburbs of Vienna. Ferdinand was born in that parish on the 18th Oct. 1794, Franz in the suburb Himmelfortgrand, on the last day of January, 1797; Ignaz it is presumed was the youngest of the three, but we have no means of ascertaining. The father was their first music teacher, but their studies in singing, violin, piano forte, and organ playing, as well as in the science of music, were perfected under the guidance of Michael Hobzer. Ferdinand's progress was such that at the age of thirteen years he played the violin concertos of Fodor, in the choir of the church, and is now one of the most distinguished organists in the Austrian capital. He, however, does not make

music his profession. At the age of sixteen (1810) he was appointed assistant teacher in the imperial orphan house, six years later was advanced to the post of teacher, and since 1824 has been a professor in the imperial normal school of St. Anna, at Vienna, as well as visitor to many of the suburban schools. As a musician, he is director in several Church-music Societies, and also of the great "Society of the Friends of Music in the Austrian Capital." He is a man of much influence, and is connected in various capacities with many charitable associations. He has made himself known as a writer on subjects connected with schools and teaching, as well as a composer. Among his musical works, a portion only of which have been published, the principal are, one *Regina Coeli*; one *Seelen Messe* in German; four Songs for the Orphan Boys; two *Tantum ergo*; one *Parade March*; twenty-four *Cadenzas* for Organ or Piano Forte; two Children's Operettes ("The Little Mischiefmaker" and the "Gleaner Girl") one *Grand Mass*; one *Requiem* to the Memory of his brother Franz—a *Requiem* being the last musical performance at which he was present;—two *Salve Regina*; one *Sonata* for the Piano Forte and *Czakan* (a sort of flute, used much in Austria). In his style he followed his brother Franz, for whom his affection was strong to an extraordinary degree. He took him into his house, which Franz never left during the last two months of his life, and in the arms of Ferdinand, the gifted young composer breathed his last.

Franz profited so greatly by the instructions of his father and Michael Hobzer, that at the age of eleven, he was placed among the singing boys of the Court Chapel,—a place for which his uncommonly fine voice peculiarly fitted him. In this position he remained five years, studied the piano forte and stringed instruments with such success, as soon to be able to lead the rehearsals of the orchestra as first violinist. The Court organist, Ruzica, was his instructor at this time in thorough bass, and old Salien in composition. After his voice changed he left the institution, being about seventeen years of age, and lived sometimes in lodgings, sometimes in his father's house; studied the works of his great triumvirate, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven; gave lessons, and devoted all the rest of his time to original composition. Long before he had mastered the rules of composition, and with no one to guide him, he had written quartets, symphonies and piano forte music; now he tried his hand at every possible style and form of composition, and the result of his labors, both as to quantity and quality, almost surpass the limits of credibility.*

Operas, Symphonies, Choruses, Overtures, Cantatas, Psalms, Masses, Graduals, Offertories, *Stabat Mater*, *Hallelujahs*, many *Sonatas*, *Trios*, *Variations*, *Fantasias*, *Rondos*, *Dances*, *Marches*, *Impromptus*, *Vocal and String Quartets*, *Italian Arias*, a *Grand Octet*, &c., &c., prove his wonderful productiveness. In *Ballads* and *Songs* it would be difficult to find his equal in musical history; more than two hundred were long since printed and have become the common inheritance of the musical world, and many others were left in manuscript.

The highest originality, deep poetical feeling, surprising truth of expression, the nicest perception of the slightest hint of the poet, a fancy full of fire, tempered by a tendency to sadness, a

simple but beautiful style of melody, the highest richness of modulation and never failing novelty in form, are some of the leading characteristics of these wonderful songs. But as genius ever finds new paths, it naturally follows that the master pays little attention to anything but the kernel, and difficulties of intonation are thrown in the way of the singer, and unexpected figures and changes in the path of the accompanist.

His only absences from Vienna were short excursions into Hungary, Steyermark, and Upper Austria. He was happiest when among the friends of his boyhood and youth, and loved the pleasures of society, especially when he could throw off all the trammels of fashionable and conventional life. He was ever cheerful, upright, and open-hearted; an enthusiast for his art, an affectionate son, an obedient and thankful pupil. His accurate perception of what his genius was fitted to accomplish, and his unerring judgment in estimating his own works, saved him from the usually ill effects of the injudicious encomiums of flatterers, and the valueless praise of mere partisans. So little did he care for the applause of the multitude, that he made it a point not to be present at the first performances of his works, choosing to have their success, if successful, depend entirely upon their intrinsic merits, rather than upon an unwillingness on the part of the audience to injure the feelings of their author. Two or three anecdotes will show the estimation in which the songs of Franz Schubert were held, while yet they were new and their author unknown out of the circle in which he moved.

One of the first of Schubert's songs was that wonderful production the "*Erl König*," composed when he was still very young. This piece struck John Michael Vogl, then a leading singer in the Imperial Opera, so forcibly, that he made it a point to sing it with all that force of expression for which he was noted, in the art loving circles of the Capital; thus bringing the boy musician at once prominently before the musical world of Vienna.

Schindler brought the "*Songs of Ossian*" and some other of Schubert's works to Beethoven, while he was lying on his death bed. Beethoven looked them through, and with a voice full of emotion exclaimed: "Truly Schubert is animated with a spark of heavenly fire!"

Jean Paul, "the Only One," he of the deepest poetic heart perhaps that has blessed the earth, he knew and felt the depths and heights of the young composer's genius; and as he drew near his last great change, a few hours before he breathed his last, he called for music, and that music the singing of several of these songs.

For the stage Schubert composed "*The Friends of Salamanca*," "*Der vierjährige Posten*," "*Fernando*," "*Die Bürgschaft*," "*The Twin Brothers*," "*Alphonzo and Estrella*," "*Fierabras*," "*The Devil's Chateau*," "*Claudine von Villa Bella*," "*Rosamond*," "*The Conspirators*," and "*The Minnesingers*." Two other operas, "*Adrastus*" and "*Sacotala*" were left unfinished.

The Autumn of 1828 came on. Schubert's fame was beginning to extend far beyond the bounds of Austria. He was already honorary member of the "Society of the Friends of Music," and of the "Philharmonic Societies" of Graetz and Innspruck, and seemed destined to supply the place of the great Beethoven, in whose funeral procession he had borne a lighted candle

on the 29th March the preceding year. Franz at this time went into the family of his brother Ferdinand to reside. From the middle of September he never left the house. A quick consumption destroyed his vital powers, and on the 19th of November he breathed his last in the arms of his brother, at the early age of 31. It was one of his last wishes to be placed by the side of Beethoven. That place had been filled. But the second simple monument to the left of the great master is adorned with the bronze bust of the disciple—a speaking likeness. There lies Schubert.

Ferdinand still recalls as the happiest days of his life, the period when the three brothers still dwelt beneath their father's roof and scarcely allowed a day to pass without joining in the performance of some quartet. Father Schubert would take the violoncello, Ferdinand the first and Ignaz the second violin, while Franz made up the quartet with his viola.

And thus Franz—for these happiest days were while he still continued in the imperial choir—during those five years of study—by practising and proving each new composition of his own, and comparing them all with the works of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, learned to see with unerring judgment his successes and his failures.

The translator and compiler of the above sketch was thrown by a fortunate accident, in the summer of 1851, into the company of Ferdinand, and though twenty-three years had passed since he had parted from Franz, and time had begun to leave its impress upon his fine features, the tones of his voice as he spoke of the deceased, showed how deeply and sincerely he still mourned the loss of the young master—the beloved brother.

[Communicated.]

A Central Opera House or Theatre.

It may be fairly doubted whether there is any very general desire for an Opera House or first-class Theatre in this city. The history of the past six months' agitation on this subject justifies this doubt. Yet it is clear to a demonstration, that such an establishment is needed by the city of Boston. Let us see why it is that the movement of the past Spring has not resulted in effecting this object. Is the absence of a general desire for it, the reason of its non-accomplishment? We think not. That this desire does not exist, we think accounted for by the fact that the mass of the community have no faith in its being a necessity of the times and of this place. That such is the fact, however, was recognized and illustrated with force and eloquence by the knot of practical and active business and professional men, who met at the Revere House in — to carry out such a project. To one familiar with Boston faces, and with Boston characteristics, the assemblage of that night, for such a purpose, must have caused great astonishment, until the main-spring of the meeting was developed. He must have looked around in amazement, asking himself, "Where are our musical men? our theatre-goers? our men of leisure? Why, these are our merchants! not even our capitalists; no,—brokers, importers, bankers, domestic-goods merchants! What have stocks, hemp, exchange, calico, sugar, to do with an opera house!"

But his amazement would have been soon

changed into admiration, by Mr. P. P. F. Degrand, who with racy good humor and practical good sense, shewed the company why the need existed, and why *they* were the very persons to supply it. The business of the city required it! The argument was not one of mere plausibility, for it were folly to attempt to impose, in this way, upon such a body of men. Facts were at hand to sustain every argument. The main point, viz.: *of the necessity of such an establishment to the business interests of the city*, was fully proved — that nail was driven home and clenched! The ardor of habitually cool men saw it so clearly, that to will and to do seemed one thing with them; and with the justifiable pride of their class they said: "Let us do this ourselves, — we, the merchants of Boston, — the active men who are to be benefited by it, and with whom, eminently, it rests to maintain the character of our city, — and let us not call in the retired capitalist; we do not need him!" Here was, however, mistake No. 1. They needed him in more senses than one. They needed his ready capital to put the enterprise at once on a sure footing, they needed the *prestige* of his wealth to give confidence and encouragement to the less public-spirited, and they needed, *most of all*, the far-seeing faith and enlarged commercial views of that sober class, to keep them true, on the calm morrow of that excited occasion, to their great idea of an establishment that would do honor to their city and so, indirectly, benefit their fellow citizens and themselves. They needed the guidance of these men to keep the question of dividends or no dividends out of their heads, and to keep a great public enterprise from degenerating into a corporate speculation. Not a word was whispered, at that meeting, of its being *good property to its subscribers*. The higher ground was distinctly taken, of an *indirect* benefit from making the city attractive to strangers.

A Committee was selected to carry the enterprise forward, perhaps as judiciously composed as the materials permitted. Our only criticism on it is, that it did not represent sufficiently diversified interests: for not a month had passed before we heard on all sides that they were discussing, which place will *pay* best? the project of shops underneath, &c., &c. As soon as this aspect of the business became prominent, and these secondary and collateral considerations were advanced to a principal position, the outsiders lost all faith in the project, at least in its being carried out on the scale and in the spirit of that first ardent and harmonious meeting.

The period of that meeting was a remarkably auspicious one. The Tremont Temple was just burned; so was the National Theatre. The "Old Drury" was in process of demolition. The Mayor spoke ardently for the enterprise. He recounted the foregoing incidents and strengthened the urgency of the new scheme by informing the company that the two remaining places of public assemblage, the Howard Athenaeum and the Melodeon, were so unsafe that he should not renew their licenses, which would expire in the coming autumn, unless they should be entirely re-modelled and made safe of ingress and egress.

Money was then and is abundant and cheap. The National Theatre, then level with the ground, has in this short interval, by the energy and capital of a few individuals, been re-built and is almost ready for occupation. What has become of the Theatre and Opera House? Why is it

not built, commenced, the money raised, applied for? The papers first announced it all subscribed, the location selected, the plans drawn. It was to be on the Coolidge Estate in Bowdoin Square. Then the Apthorp Estate in Boylston Street; then the Estate on the corner of Hayward Place and Washington Street; then corner of School and Tremont; and last of all, the papers lately assured us that the Gas Company's lot, in Mason Street, was decided on, and then came a contradiction to this, with the explanation that the Gas Company asked too much money for it; and we have more recently heard, on pretty good authority, that the Gas Company have never received a proposal for their land! In the midst of all these announcements and contradictions, all, we believe, unauthorized, shall we hazard a guess as to the facts, and an opinion on the reasons of the facts? We think that the Committee were discouraged, not at the price of the various Estates offered them, but at the very small amount subscribed. And the difficulty experienced in raising the money, we think, is ascribable to the mistaken plan of procedure. But instead of going into the details of these mistakes, we will here give our own views of the best course to fairly test the question, "Is a central Theatre or Opera House wanted or not?"

Enlarge the Committee to fifteen or twenty members. Ascertain, by discussion in committee, which location ranks A No. 1, independent of cost, and which A No. 2. Get the refusal of both estates for thirty days, which is long enough; get it *gratis*, if you can, but get it, even if you pay \$1 to \$500 for it. Having learned the lowest price of each, take a vote in committee on the point, which, on the whole, is most desirable? Call such one A and the other B. Go to an Architect with the shape and contents of the lot, agree with him upon a plan, take his estimate of the cost of construction, and with these data, form your own opinion of the whole cost of the enterprise. Thus prepared, go to some ten or twenty of our most public-spirited men, either by circular or orally, and say to them as follows: "Gentlemen, the merchants of Boston say that a first-class Theatre or Opera House is required for the prosperity and character of the city. You have heard the arguments and seen the need recognized in the papers generally. We have been selected to carry out this design. We have obtained an act of Incorporation and have secured the refusal of two lots of land, both suitable for the purpose, and both within the limit of — street on the North, and — street on the South. Our plans and estimates have been carefully made, and we, after making allowance for a contingent excess, have determined that — thousand dollars will be required. We have fixed the par of the shares at so much. We wish you to take the lead and give us your names for thirty days; — this, if you encourage it, will be sufficient to determine whether the commercial and monied interest of the city have faith in the *want*, and faith in these means to meet it." We think there is little doubt that a sufficient number of this class, if appealed to in this practical and straightforward way, could easily be found to furnish \$75,000. If not, then give the project up as premature and not required. If you get this sum subscribed, exhibit these names and sums at the Music Stores, Hotels, Merchants' Exchange, and in the daily newspapers, — annexed to a cir-

cular stating explicitly the above details of your plan, and add, in substance, as follows: "The undersigned Committee, &c., selected, &c., have consented to devote thirty days to raising the amount of — dollars to purchase the land and build a first-class Theatre for Dramatic and Operatic representations. Believing this period of time to be amply sufficient to test the desire of the public to encourage such a project, they have obtained the refusal of two eligible estates within the above-mentioned local limits, and the promise of the sums hereto annexed on the part of the above-named gentlemen, — said promise to stand thirty days and no longer. If the sum required is made up on the — day of — (thirty days from date) the undersigned hereby pledge themselves to carry out the work in a manner which shall do honor to the city and gratify the pride of the citizens. If not, they, and perhaps the public at large, will rest satisfied that the time is not yet ripe for such a project." One more caution, which we consider of vital importance. *Let the shares be made small (say not over \$250) and no privileges reserved to ANY ONE.* Thirty days, we confidently believe, would bring the money, whether it were two or three hundred thousand dollars; for we think the first case has not yet occurred, where the retired merchants and men of wealth of this good city, have refused an appeal to their purses for a public object *which they believed required for the interest and honor of Boston.* Should they refuse it, it ought to be conclusive that they *do not so believe*, and if they do not so believe, the public, including our humble selves would, we think, assent to their conclusion and sit down quietly with the Museum, the "National," the Music Hall, and the re-modelled Howard Athenaeum, or, with the Southern and Western traders, will go to New York for our amusements and save the cost of the journey in buying our knick-knacks and a new suit of clothes cheaper there; for anxious as we may feel, in the character of musicians, to have a suitable place to attract and listen to the world-renowned artists who seem to be *all* coming to our shores, we will not pretend either that we are more cognizant of the true interests or more jealous of the true honor of our city, than the class we refer to. SPES.

Musical Intelligence.

Local.

THE GERMANIA SERENADE BAND gave their first afternoon Concert on Wednesday, to a good audience. We were not so fortunate as to hear the overture to *Oberon*, with which the Concert began, but heard high praise of the manner in which it was performed. The quartet by Mozart which followed, was played in the best style by Messrs. Suck, Verron, Eichler, and Wulf Fries. Mr. Suck's violin solo was also a very finished performance, and called forth warm applause. The brass music was of the best, and a friend whose musical privileges have been greater than our own, assures us that no where has he ever heard better. To our own taste, however, it is rather loud for the limited size of the *Melodeon*. A march composed by Mr. Schnapp was especially well performed, and received much applause. The waltzes were given with much spirit, quite rivaling in their execution that of the Germania Society. The Rail Road Galop, by Gung'l, was, however, decidedly wanting in the *go-ahead* energy with which the *Steyermarsische Company* played it; the Conductor evidently had the fear of the law before his eyes, and did not put on quite steam enough. The improvement which has always been remarked between each Concert of this Society, was even more noticeable after the vacation just ended; and we observed an addition of one violon-

cello and one violin to the ranks of the orchestra. The time, it should be observed, has been altered to 3 o'clock.

THE GERMANIA MUSICAL SOCIETY. We hardly need even ask the attention of our readers to the advertisement of the Germania orchestra. With the delightful recollections of last winter still fresh in our minds, it is unnecessary to say anything more than that the Germanians are to be with us on the 15th of November, and that their first concert will be given as soon as the Music Hall shall be finished, which there is no reason to suppose will be at a later date than that named above. It will be seen that JAELL is to assist them in the whole series of their concerts, and we also are informed that the orchestra has been enlarged by the addition of six stringed instruments, making their whole number to consist now of thirty performers. This addition goes far towards that perfect proportion in the composition of the orchestra which has seemed to be almost the only thing wanting to its perfection. We are indebted to this society for the finest orchestral performances that have ever been given in this city. More than that, we are indebted to them for the knowledge of many of the choicest treasures of classical music. They have done much, both by the perfection of their execution and the selection of their programmes, to elevate the standard of musical taste in our audiences, and to quicken and stimulate the ambition of our resident musicians to keep pace with the advancing standard. For this we owe them much, and would welcome them back to Boston with most sincere wishes for their success.

THE MUSICAL FUND SOCIETY, (as we learn from the daily papers,) has entered the field for the coming season. Their afternoon concerts will commence on Friday, September 17, at the *Melodeon*, and will be given there until the completion of the *Music Hall*, when they will be continued there. The crowd of competitors against whom this Society will have to contend will be greater this season than ever before, and it behooves our old friends to take good care that they lose none of the laurels already won. We are glad to observe that *private* rehearsals have already been begun, which have become absolutely necessary to ensure that proper performance of the music which could not be had by rehearsals before an audience of a thousand persons. The new music selected in Europe, by Mr. August Fries, to replace the library of the Society destroyed by fire last winter, has already arrived, and, under the auspices of Mr. Fries, who this season holds the conductor's baton, (which Mr. Webb, by the pressure of other cares has been obliged to resign,) we doubt not that the performances of this Society will equal, if not surpass, those of former seasons. We have but one other wish as regards this Society, and that is, that we might hear some of its members on the instruments for which they are best fitted, and on which they especially excel. The performances of the GERMANIA SERENADE BAND have shown us what gentlemen who are also members of the Fund can do on their favorite instruments, and the public will hardly be satisfied with a less degree of perfection in these particulars than we have seen may be attained merely by some changes most easily made.

New York.

The steamship Arctic arrived at New York on Sunday evening last, bringing HENRIETTE SONTAG, the celebrated prima donna. Her party consisted of her husband Count Rossi, Signor Pozzillini, tenor, from the Imperial Opera; and Monsieur Eckert, conductor, from the Italian Opera, Paris. On the voyage, Sontag gave a concert, and distributed the proceeds among the crew. At divine service on board the ship on Sunday, she took part in the singing.

ALBONI gave her first Concert on Tuesday evening, assisted by SAN GIOVANNI and ROVERE. The *Tribune* says:

"To our mind her *Sonnambula* was her triumph.—Nothing could be more perfect throughout than the plaintive but rich *Ah! non credete*, followed by the delicious *Ah! non giunge*. We have heard most of the stars of song in this air, and we are bold to say that Alboni showed as correct a conception of the sentiment, and rendered the music of the composer as brilliantly, more purely, and with less extraneous ornament, than any whom we can call to mind. It afforded her a fine opportunity of displaying those rich *cantato* notes of which everybody has heard. The ill-contained impatience of the audience to applaud proved the wonder and admiration with which they were received. If we mistake not,

Madame Alboni herself will concur with us in the opinion that the *Ah! non giunge* was her great piece: she exerted herself far more in singing it than in the other airs, and, when the audience insisted on an *encore*, could not conceal symptoms of fatigue."

CALIFORNIA. SIGNORA BISCACCIANTE. This popular and talented cantatrice returned last evening from Santa Clara Valley. She gave a concert at San José last evening, which was one of the most brilliant and most largely attended of the season. The Signora leaves in a few days, to favor the citizens of Stockton with her angelic strains. — *Alta California*, 14th ult.

England.

LONDON. HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE.—On Saturday night, Her Majesty's Theatre closed its doors for the season, the opera being the "Barbier de Sévillia." It was exceedingly well performed, and we have scarcely ever seen it go off with greater spirit. Madame de la Grange is really a charming *Rosina*. The elegant gaiety of the character is quite suited to her style of acting. She sang with marvellous brilliancy, performing prodigies of execution with such graceful ease and such exquisite clearness and finish, that one could not help admiring them even when they were most questionable in point of taste and propriety.

The past season, in so far as this theatre is concerned, has been so monotonous and so destitute of interesting occurrences, that it does not furnish matter for any detailed retrospect. That it has been a very unfortunate one is a fact of public notoriety; and it would have come to a premature close had not a number of the establishment stepped forward to its support. There can be no doubt that this want of success was owing, in a considerable degree, to Mademoiselle Wagner's breach of engagement. Upon this celebrated lady the lessee certainly depended (as he had formerly done upon Jenny Lind) as the great feature of the season; and it was with reference to her that he had made his calculations and arrangements. Disappointed in this most essential object, the plan of his campaign was upset, and he was precluded from bringing forward those pieces in which Mademoiselle Wagner's appearance would have constituted an interesting novelty. He was thus thrown back upon the ordinary *repertoire* of the theatre; and, although the performances during the season have always been respectable, and often excellent, yet the pieces performed have been too well known to be attractive. With the solitary exception of the Duke of Saxe-Coburg's "Casilda," not a single opera has been produced this season that was not quite familiar to the public. During a large part of the season, the great weight of the performances lay upon Mademoiselle Crivelli, whose labors were zealous, unremitting and efficient. But, for a reason that may be guessed at, she suddenly withdrew; increasing by her secession the lessee's difficulties.

The circumstances most worthy of commemoration have been the introduction to the English public of Madame de la Grange and Signor Bassini; and the debut of Madame Charton upon the Italian stage. Madame de la Grange has become, and most deservedly, a very great favorite. Signor de Bassini we regard as the most satisfactory baritone we have possessed since the best days of Tamburini. And Madame Charton promises to be as admirable on the Italian as she is on the French stage.

ROYAL ITALIAN OPERA. Few events in the operatic world have been anticipated with a greater degree of curiosity than the production of M. Jullien's long-promised opera of *Pietro il Grande*. Many were, indeed, sceptical about the matter, and would not be persuaded that the grand master of quadrilles and waltzes, the director of Promenade Concerts, who animates the feet of the dancers and revellers at the *Bal Musqué*, could find time, inclination and ability to devote to the composition of an opera. The "man of the people," however, disappointed his patrons for the first time. That M. Jullien has a soul above polkas must be sufficiently evident to those who have watched his progress for years, and appreciated his untiring efforts to render the highest class of orchestral music acceptable to the crowd. Whoever, noticing these indications of a more serious bent in Jullien, has been used to regard him as much in the light of a reformer as of a public amuser, must have been rather pleased than surprised at the announcement of a grand opera from his pen.

It is a more difficult task to speak of the music of M. Jullien. Its prevalent defects are a want of sustained style, a superfluous employment of modulation, chromatic scales and harmonies, and a method of instrumentation which sometimes leads to obscurity, though it frequently attains new and striking effects. As with the orchestra, so with the voices; M. Jullien, in pursuing the phantom of originality, which never yields to wooing, but comes naturally or not at all, is tempted to hazardous experiments, not always crowned with success. Add to these a diffuseness, showing M. Jullien to be a contemner of the maxim "Brevity is the soul of wit,"—a tendency to that fragmentary kind of writing which Meyerbeer began and Halévy emulates, but which, not being excellent in art, cannot be imitated with success—an excessive use of the brass instruments, and those of percussion, and a tolerable number of reminiscences from the forms and ideas of other composers—and we have exhausted our catalogue of objections. On the other side of the balance-sheet there is

happily enough to atone for many more sins of omission and commission. One great quality in M. Jullien's music is its unflagging spirit. However ambitiously elaborate, and however lengthy in certain places, it is never dull. Tamberlik, Mad'le Anne Zerr, and Herr Formes sustained the principal parts, and their performance is highly commended.

As a *spectacle* few operas have been more liberally put upon the stage. The costumes are magnificent, and the scenery and decorations appropriate and picturesque. In the *finale* to the second act—the battle of Pultava—the stage was literally covered with supernumeraries, and the processions were gorgeous and extravagant. The horses, however, excited some marks of dissatisfaction the moment they appeared; although they looked very much like the same horses that have been applauded in the *Juive* and the *Huguenots*, and conducted themselves quite as well.

M. Jullien himself presided in the orchestra, and received a hearty welcome on his appearance.—*The Times*, Aug. 13.

The *London Daily News* says of this opera: "We thought the author of the *Huguenots* and the *Prophète* had carried the power of physical sound in music as far as it could well go; but he roars 'like any sucking dove' compared to the author of *Pietro il Grande*. Jullien, moreover, has not merely borrowed Meyerbeer's general manner, but has directly imitated many particular passages. *Rossini's* war-song, sung by Formes in the second act, is taken from *Marcel's* famous 'Pif-paf' in the *Huguenots*. The chorus of conspirators in the same act is a reminiscence of the 'benediction of poniards' in the above opera; and in the third act there is a passage, also in a chorus of conspirators, which strongly recalls the duet between *Valentine* and *Marcel*. There are constant traces, too, of Mozart, Rossini, and Weber; and a large proportion of M. Jullien's phrases have, by frequent previous use, become common property. He is most successful in his choruses, several of which are most spirited and effective; and least successful in his airs, every one of which is a decided failure. . . . The gem of the opera is the national Russian hymn, *Di Moscoria eletti figli*, sung in the first act as a solo and chorus; afterwards as the finale to the opera. The melody has much simple grandeur; and it is harmonized and arranged with great skill and the happiest effect.

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